

[9 August, 2000]

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to our troops, due to disturbed situation prevailing in Sierra Leone as well as irregular flights from Accra to Freetown. This problem has since been resolved by routing the mail through Conakry. Our troops are receiving their mail regularly now.

The Indian soldiers serving in the UNAMSIL Mission, Sierra Leone are receiving their full entitlements of overseas allowances and the same is being credited to their individual accounts in banks in India. It has not been possible so far to disburse overseas allowances to the Indian soldiers in US dollars in Sierra Leone, due to the inability of the banks in Sierra Leone to handle cash in dollars. Efforts are being made to disburse overseas allowances to the soldiers in US dollars through a neighbouring African country.

Meanwhile, orders have been issued to for sending one IAF aircraft on courier service to Sierra Leone every month with a view to facilitate disbursement of overseas allowances and also carry other items including those for personal use of the Indian troops.

Violation of Indian Skies

† 1895. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of incidents registered during the year 1999 and till July, 2000 for violation of Indian skies and land border;

(b) the number of incidents out of above which have been countered;

(c) the number of violators killed and arrested; and

(d) the details of the action taken to check such violations?

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the period from 1.1.1999 till 26.7.2000, Pakistani soldiers made 19 attempts to capture/raid our posts by crossing the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL)/Line of Control (LOC). All their attempts were repulsed and heavy casualties were inflicted on them. 78 Pakistani soldiers were killed during these incidents. All requisite steps have been taken to deal with such attempts.

2. In so far as the boundary between India and China is concerned, the resolution of the same is outstanding. The two sides have differences in perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Both sides carry out patrolling as per their respective perceptions of the LAC. Protests have been lodged through Flag Meetings, Border Personnel Meetings and also by the MEA through diplomatic channels against the Chinese activities. Our troops undertake patrolling along the LAC/IB from time to time. Both sides have reiterated their commitment to a mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question.

3. Foreign aircraft violated our air space on 60 occasions during the same period. Protests were lodged with the concerned countries in respect of all the violations reported by the Air Hqrs. When a Pakistani military combat aircraft violated our airspace on 10.8.1999 in Gujarat, it was shot down by IAF aircraft. The Pakistani aircraft had engaged in aggressive manoeuvres against our intercepting aircraft. Our aircraft took action in accordance with standard operating procedures. As reported by Pakistan, 16 Pakistani defence personnel were killed in the incident.

4. Adequate Air Defence measures are in place to thwart any hostile activity of foreign aircraft.